

Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld Creates a Natural Outdoor Learning Laboratory with Comsewogue School District at the Terryville Greenbelt

posted on 12/7/2012 9:22:56 PM

December , 2012

Town-School Stewardship Agreement Forges a Synergistic Proactive Community Use Relationship

Farmingville, NY - On Tuesday, December 4, a resolution sponsored by Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld was unanimously approved by the Town Board that establishes a stewardship agreement with the Comsewogue School District. The agreement allows students from the district to "adopt" the Terryville Greenbelt to be used for environmental and historical educational purposes and to help maintain the property pursuant to the Town's "Adopt-A-Preserve" program.

The Comsewogue School District will use the property as an "outdoor learning laboratory" to conduct environmental and historical educational activities, study programs, passive use athletic training such as jogging, walking and hiking, and stewardship responsibilities. The district will also organize clean-ups, perform minor clearing and maintenance of the hiking path, co-ordinate drives for donations of indigenous plants, remove invasive species and more.

Councilman Fiore Rosenfeld said, "The Terryville Greenbelt is a critical drinking water recharge area and an environmental asset to the Town. I was glad to lead the efforts to preserve and protect so far a lion's share of this pine barren's eco-system from incompatible development, and now see to fruition this natural synergistic partnership with the neighboring Comsewogue School District to create an outdoor learning laboratory. I look forward to working with the faculty and students, as well as other related eco-friendly organizations on many environmentally conscious projects to restore the vitality and healthy use of our community's greenbelt."

"Preserving the Terryville Greenbelt is important to the open space policies of the Town of Brookhaven, said Supervisor Ed Romaine, "I am pleased to work with Councilman Fiore Rosenfeld to ensure this stewardship agreement with Comsewogue School District."

Assemblyman Steve Engelbright said, "This is a great day for the community. Working with the Comsewogue School District and Community leaders, Brookhaven Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld has set the stage for ultimate preservation of almost all of the last remaining native Pine Barrens forest of historic Terryville. From the perspective of public health, historic preservation, conservation, and passive outdoor recreation the importance of this initiative cannot be overstated. In the spirit of this holiday season Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld and all who enabled the Terryville Greenbelt have provided a priceless gift to the community that present and future generations will treasure."

Superintendent of the Comsewogue School District, Dr. Joseph Rella said, "This is a very exciting opportunity for our students. They will now be able to take advantage of a wonderful outdoor learning laboratory right in our own backyard - literally. We are grateful to Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld and the Town for their donation. Please know that we will make good use of it. We will be good stewards."

"The Board of Education was both excited and impressed by Councilman Fiore Rosenfeld's effort to preserve a critical piece of land. We see this agreement as a win-win situation. We here at Comsewogue have the privilege of using such a historical piece of property while our science teachers and students can see first hand some of the things they are learning in the classroom. The fact that the property is adjacent to our school makes it easy for our students to access. At the same time we can watch over and help to preserve the land for the town. As well as the benefits to our science department, it will also serve as a beautiful place for a jog or a walk through the beauty of nature. We look forward to this new adventure" stated John Swenning, Comsewogue School Board President.

Ed Garboski, President of the Port Jefferson Station/ Terryville Civic Association said, "I would like to commend the town board for recognizing the importance of the Greenway around the Comsewogue High School. Not only is this an important watershed but it will be a great learning tool for our children for years to come. I would like to thank Steve Fiore Rosenfeld for his tireless effort in acquiring open space for our community and his continued dedication to all of his constituents."

Lou Antoniello, Treasurer of the Port Jefferson Station / Terryville Civic Association and Open Space Committee Chair, heading up the Main Street Project said, "I can still remember approaching Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld and asking him to assist in preserving open space in the Communities of Terryville and Port Jefferson Station. We met on a Saturday with John Turner and Supervisor Foley at Comsewogue High School to showcase the property. I guess you can say the rest is history. The preservation of the Terryville Greenbelt is an initiative that is ongoing and maturing. To enter into a Stewardship Agreement with the Comsewogue School District is a natural progression toward achieving the ultimate goal of not only preserving open space, but also utilizing and recognizing the open space as a community asset. By recognizing the Terryville Greenbelt as a community asset we create awareness which leads to a better appreciation and utilization of our open space. By preserving our wilderness we preserve our history, my hope is that we continue to preserve both in Terryville and Port Jefferson Station."

The Terryville Greenbelt is an important Town ecological asset nearly 32 acres in size. It is a remnant of the Terryville Outwash Plains created in the last ice age and is a critical watershed which annually provides aquifer recharge for millions of gallons of clean drinking water. This remaining forested pine barrens ecosystem with sandy soils wraps around the exterior of the Comsewogue School District property directly to the east and south abutting the Comsewogue High School and its athletic fields, bounded generally by Bicycle Path to the west and NYS Route 112 to its east in Port Jefferson Station.

Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld has been a staunch advocate of the Town's open space initiative and in December 2010, he was instrumental in the Town's acquisition of the 16 parcels in the Terryville Greenbelt conservation area adjacent to Comsewogue High School. The entire Terryville Greenbelt is 60 acres and over 37 have been purchased by the Town under its long-standing policy to protect this critical watershed area. The goal is to eventually purchase the remaining parcels within the greenbelt so that this assemblage of properties will be wholly protected and interconnected. To learn more about how Councilman Steve Fiore Rosenfeld is working to protect the environment in the Town of Brookhaven, go to www.brookhaven.org.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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